



CANADA'S NATIVE PEOPLE

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1981 Census of Canada

CANADA'S NATIVE PEOPLE

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INTRODUCTION

The 1981 Census counted about half a million Canadians who reported native ancestry. The census identified the following four groups of native people: status Indians, non-status Indians, Métis and Inuit.

Status Indians are native people registered under the Indian Act. This Act defines the criteria for registration as a status Indian and describes the rights and obligations involved. Non-status Indians are native people who identify themselves as Indians, but are not registered for the purposes of the Indian Act. Métis are descendants of people of mixed aboriginal and European ancestry who formed a distinct socio-cultural entity in the nineteenth century. The Métis have gone on to absorb the mixed offspring of native Indians and groups from all over the world. The Inuit are a distinct cultural group who generally live north of the tree line. Most of them share a native language, Inuktitut.

In earlier censuses, only the respondent's paternal ancestry was to be reported, thus resulting in one ethnic origin per respondent. For 1981, this restriction was removed, and ancestry could be traced through both the father and mother. Consequently, people could report more than one ethnic origin, and 1981 data are not comparable with earlier figures.

All the data in this report are from the 1981 Census. The counts of native people are based on a question that asked respondents to report their ethnic origin. Thus, the numbers represent those persons who clearly identified themselves with one of the native groups.

Readers should realize, therefore, that the self-reported counts discussed here may be at variance with data from other sources. For example, while the census counted close to 175,000 Métis and non-status Indians, other sources estimate a higher population for this group.

This report discusses those native people who were identified by the 1981 Census. It tells who and where they are and how they live. It examines their languages, education and income. Finally, it provides an idea of what these findings may indicate for the future.

Highlights from the 1981 Census:

- Many native households are large and include extended family members, such as grandparents, brothers and sisters or in-laws. Much of the housing is overcrowded, lacks modern facilities and needs repairs.
- Although the trend is slowing, ever-married native women have more children than non-native women. Lone parenthood is more prevalent among native people.
- Most native people speak English rather than a native language.
- Fewer natives than non-natives acquire an advanced education, fewer join the labour force, and when they do, unemployment is high.
- On average, native people receive two-thirds of the income of other Canadians. Many are involved in seasonal employment. Men are most often in construction, and women in clerical or service jobs.

HOW LARGE ARE THE MAIN NATIVE GROUPS AND WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

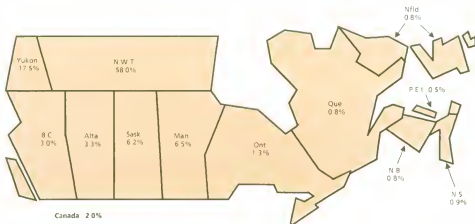
Native People Are a Small Proportion of Canada's Total Population

The 491,460 individuals who identified themselves as native people in the 1981 Census made up just 2% of the total population. However, they were not evenly distributed across the country. In the Northwest Territories they were the majority - nearly 60% of all residents - and about 20% of Yukon inhabitants were native people.

Among the provinces, Manitoba and Saskatchewan had the highest proportions of native people - more than 6%. Around 3% of the residents of Alberta and British Columbia claimed native ancestry. East of Manitoba, about 1 person in 100 was identified as native.

Chart 1

Native People as a Percentage of the Total Population,
Canada, Provinces and Territories, 1981



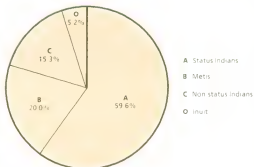
Source: 1981 Census of Canada

More than Half Are Status Indians

The census found that 6 in 10 native people were status Indians. Métis were the next most numerous group, accounting for 2 in every 10.

Chart 3

Percentage Distribution by Native Group of Native People, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Most Native People Live in the West

Although the census counted native people in each province, more than half resided in the Prairies and British Columbia. However, different native groups lived in different regions. Two-thirds of the Métis were in the Prairies; the proportion of Inuit in the territories was almost as high. Unlike other native groups, fairly large proportions of Inuit were in the Atlantic region (Labrador) and Quebec.

More than Half of All Native People Live in Rural Areas, But Not on Farms

Just 4 in 10 native people made their homes in urban areas compared with nearly 8 in 10 other Canadians. Native people were also less apt to live in very large cities - only 24% were in cities with populations greater than 100,000, while this was the case for 52% of non-natives.

The census indicated that non-status Indians most favoured urban living: 7 out of 10 were in urban areas as were 6 out of 10 Métis. By contrast, just 2 in 10 Inuit and 3 in 10 status Indians were city dwellers.

Table 1

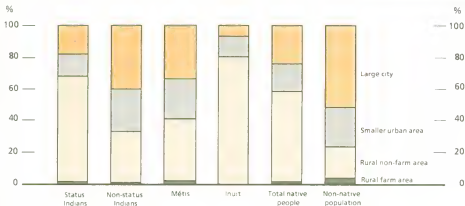
Percentage Distribution by Region of Native People and of the Non-native Population, Canada, 1981

Native group	Region						Total	
	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia	Territories		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Status Indians	3.9	11.8	24.0	38.6	18.5	3.2	100.0	(292,705)
Non-status Indians	4.4	7.7	34.7	24.7	25.4	2.9	100.0	(75,110)
Métis	1.5	7.4	12.9	66.2	9.1	2.8	100.0	(98,260)
Inuit	7.9	19.2	4.3	3.5	2.0	63.0	100.0	(25,390)
Total native	3.7	10.7	22.4	40.2	16.8	6.2	100.0	(491,460)
Non-native	9.2	26.4	35.4	17.4	11.3	0.3	100.0	(23,592,035)

Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Chart 3

Percentage Distribution by Urban Size Group, Rural Non-farm and Rural Farm of Native People and of the Non-native Population, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Although native people were more than twice as likely as other Canadians to inhabit rural areas, non-natives were more apt to be on farms. Just 4% of the rural native population lived on farms in contrast to close to 20% of rural non-natives.

Not All Status Indians Live on Reserves

Indian Reserves are territories set aside according to treaties between the federal government and the Indians. Status Indians were the only native group with significant numbers living on reserves. Even so, at the national level, fewer than 60% of status Indians resided there.

There are no reserves in Newfoundland. In every other province, more than half the status Indians were living on reserves.

On-reserve living was most common in the Maritimes, accounting for better than 7 in 10 status Indians. The proportion fell to about 6 out of 10 in the Prairies and to about 5 out of 10 in Ontario and British Columbia.

In Brief

- The 491,460 native people identified in the 1981 Census made up about 2% of the total population.
- The four groups - status Indians, non-status Indians, Métis and Inuit - are concentrated in different regions.
- Native people tend to live in the West and the North.
- They are likely to live in rural districts, but not on farms.

HOW DO NATIVE POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS COMPARE WITH THOSE OF NON-NATIVES?

Native Women Have More Children than Non-native Women

The average number of children for ever-married native women was 3.8, considerably higher than the 2.5 for other ever-married women. The native groups with the highest fertility rates were status Indians on reserves, with an average of 4.8 children, and the Inuit with

4.6 children. Non-status Indians and status Indians living off reserves had the lowest fertility rates - 3.0 and 3.4 children per ever-married woman, respectively.

One out of 4 ever-married native women had given birth to 6 or more children, in contrast to 1 in every 13 for non-native women.

Table 2

Average Number of Children Born to Ever-married Native and Non-native Women, by Age Groups, Canada, 1981

Age group	Status (on reserve)	Status (off reserve)	Non-status	Métis	Inuit	Total native	Non-native
Total	4.8	3.4	3.0	3.6	4.6	3.8	2.5
15-44 years	3.5	2.6	2.3	2.6	3.6	2.8	1.8
45-64 years	7.0	5.7	5.0	5.7	7.3	6.1	3.3
65 years and over	6.8	5.8	5.2	6.1	6.6	6.3	3.2

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

Table 3

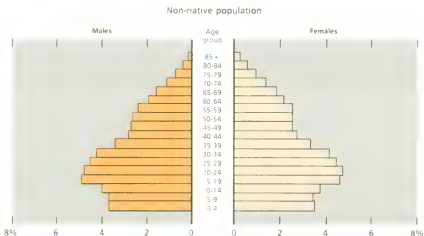
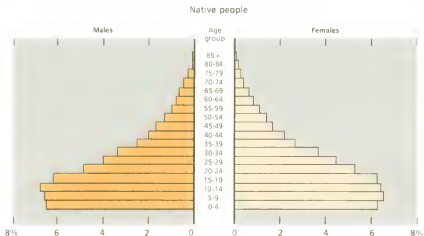
Percentage of Ever-married Native and Non-native Women Who Gave Birth to Six or More Children, by Age Groups, Canada, 1981

Age group	Status (on reserve)	Status (off reserve)	Non-status	Métis	Inuit	Total native	Non-native
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	35	20	15	21	34	24	8
15-44 years	20	10	7	10	22	12	2
45-64 years	62	48	38	46	66	51	14
65 years and over	59	47	39	49	58	52	17

Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Chart 4

Age-sex Profile of Native People and of the Non-native Population, Canada, 1981



The Native Population Is Young

Because native people have more children and because they do not live as long as other Canadians, young people made up a much larger proportion of the native population. Seven out of 10 were under 30 years compared with just 5 out of 10 for the rest of the population. In 1981, the average age of native people was 23 in contrast to 32 for non-natives.

More Children But Fewer Elderly among Native Groups

Close to 40% of all native people were younger than 15, while just 3% were 65 or older. By contrast, children made up only 22% of the rest of the population, but the elderly accounted for 9%.

The Inuit had the highest proportion of their population younger than 15, while on-reserve status Indians had both a high proportion under 15 and older than 65.

The large number of native people either too young or too old to work meant that the percentage of native people in the working age population was smaller than for non-natives. However, this is changing and will continue to change as the current young generation ages and enters the labour market.

Table 4

Percentage of Children and Elderly among Native Groups, Canada, 1981

Age group	Status (on reserve)	Status (off reserve)	Non- status	Métis	Inuit
	%	%	%	%	%
0-14 years	40	38	35	40	43
65 years and over	5	3	2	3	3
Total of 0-14 years and 65 years and over	45	41	37	43	46

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

Native Women Outnumber Native Men

For every 1,000 native women, there were 975 native men - somewhat lower than the 986 non-native men per 1,000 non-native women. The ratio for off-reserve status Indians was a low 864 men per 1,000 women. But among on-reserve status Indians and the Inuit, men were more numerous. There were 1,067 men for every 1,000 status Indian women on reserves and 1,047 Inuit men for every 1,000 Inuit women.

Among Status Indians, Young People and Women Are Most Likely to Live Off Reserves

About half the status Indians aged 25-39 lived off reserves. In contrast, 7 in 10 elderly status Indians lived on reserves.

Status Indian women were much more inclined to live off reserve than men. From ages 20 to 59, the proportion of women living away from reserves exceeded the proportion of men by about 10 percentage points.

In Brief

- Native women have more children than other women.
- The native population is "younger" than the rest of the population.
- Except for status Indians living on reserves and the Inuit, native women outnumber native men.

WHAT LANGUAGES DO NATIVE PEOPLE SPEAK?

English Is the Language of Most Native People

Six out of 10 native people reported English as the first language they learned as children. Only 3 in 10 claimed a native language as their mother tongue, while French and other languages accounted for the remainder.

Among native languages, the Algonkian group was most common. Within this category, Cree ranked first followed by Ojibway. This was true for all native people except the Inuit, three-quarters of whom had Inuktitut as their mother tongue.

Table 5

Percentage Distribution by Mother Tongue of Native People, Canada, 1981

Mother tongue	Status (on reserve)	Status (off reserve)	Non- status	Métis	Inuit	Total native
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total native languages	46.6	18.0	9.5	13.9	74.1	28.7
Algonkian languages	38.2	13.1	7.5	12.7	0.2	20.2
Cree	24.1	8.8	5.3	10.3	0.1	13.4
Ojibway	6.9	3.3	1.9	2.3	0.1	4.0
Other Algonkian	7.2	1.0	0.3	0.1	-	2.8
Athapaskan languages	2.7	3.9	1.6	1.1	0.1	2.4
Inuktitut	-	-	-	-	73.8	3.8
Iroquoian languages	3.4	0.1	-	-	-	1.2
Other native languages	2.3	0.9	0.4	0.1	-	1.1
English	46.4	71.9	79.5	75.0	24.2	62.4
French	1.8	4.6	6.6	8.9	0.9	4.6
Other	5.2	5.4	4.3	2.1	0.8	4.3

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

Nearly 67,000 or 14% of all native people spoke a language at home that was not their mother tongue. Those with native mother tongues were more inclined to switch: 29% of them used some other language most frequently at home. By contrast, just 3% of those whose mother tongue was English used a different language at home. Of the small number who claimed French to be their mother tongue, 23% had adopted a different home language.

More than 8 in 10 of those who shifted languages used English most frequently at home. Another 12% had switched to a native language, with French and other languages accounting for about 3% each.

Use of Native Languages Differs among Native Groups

The Inuit were most likely to have first learned a native language and still use it at home. Non-status Indians had the highest proportions with English as their mother tongue and home language. The Métis were more apt than other native people to cite French, although the proportions who did so were nowhere near the majority of Métis who claimed English. Status Indians living off reserves were least likely to retain a native language: fewer than half whose mother tongue was a native language continued to use it as the most frequent language of the home.

In Brief

- With the exception of the Inuit, native people use English most frequently at home.
- In terms of primary use at home, one in every seven native people has switched languages.
- Those with a native mother tongue were the most likely to eventually adopt another language.
- Native languages are strongest among the Inuit and status Indians living on reserves.

WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF NATIVE PEOPLE?

Native People Have Less Formal Education than Other Canadians

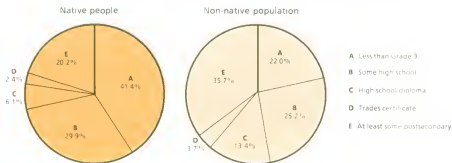
Around 15% of the native population 15 years and older not attending school full-time had less than a Grade 5 education, compared with 5% of non-natives. More than 4 in 10 native people never went to high school, as opposed to 2 in 10 non-natives. About one-quarter of the native population had at least a high school diploma, while this was true of half of other Canadians. University degrees were held by 2% of native people compared with 8% of non-natives.

Up to the Postsecondary Level, Native Women Have More Formal Education than Native Men

More native men than women had less than a Grade 5 education. While the same proportions of native women and men had graduated from high school, only 1.6% of the women held university degrees, compared with 2.4% of native men.

Chart 5

Percentage Distribution by Highest Level of Schooling Completed of Native People* and of the Non-native Population,* Canada, 1981



*Population 15 years and over, not attending school full-time.
Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

The Greatest Differences Are Between Native People in Rural and Urban Areas

Just 7% of the native people living in urban areas had less than Grade 5, compared with 20% in rural regions. About a quarter of urban natives had never attended high school, but among those in rural areas, the proportion rose to more than half. Over 3% of the natives living in cities had university degrees, compared with fewer than 1% of natives in rural areas.

The Inuit and Status Indians on Reserves Have Less Formal Education than Other Native Groups

The Inuit had the highest proportion of persons with less than Grade 5, followed by status Indians living on reserves. These two groups were also the least likely to hold degrees. Non-status Indians had the lowest proportion with less than Grade 5 and the highest with degrees.

For all native groups, there were more people who had not gone beyond Grade 5 than there were people who had completed university.

Higher Educational Attainment among Young People Suggests Future Changes

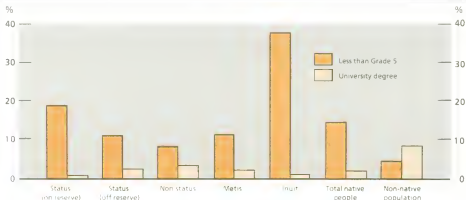
Of native people aged 15-29 who were not full-time students, only 3% had not gone past Grade 5. By contrast, for native people 65 years and over, the proportion jumped to 57%. Similarly, about a quarter of 15-29-year olds never attended high school, while this was true of 85% of those aged 65 and over.

In Brief

- Educational levels among Canada's native people are lower than among other Canadians
- Rural native people have much lower levels of attainment than those in urban areas
- Non-status Indians have the highest levels of education, while the Inuit and on-reserve status Indians have the lowest
- Young people have more education than their elders

Chart 6

Percentage of Native People* and of the Non-native Population* With Less than Grade 5 and With University Degrees, Canada, 1981



*Population 15 years and over not attending school full-time
Source: 1981 Census of Canada

EMPLOYED OR UNEMPLOYED?

WHAT KIND OF JOBS?

Statistics Canada's definitions of labour force participation and unemployment were formulated in concert with other industrialized countries and are relevant under conditions of a well-developed labour market. These definitions are not fully appropriate for native people who pursue a traditional way of life or live in remote communities. Many native people who are living on the land may not show up as participating in the labour force because what they produce is consumed rather than sold in the market-place. This is especially the case for on-reserve status Indians and the Inuit. In addition, the isolation of the areas where many native people live discourages active job search, and thus they may not be counted among the unemployed. These conceptual limitations of census labour market information are important to keep in mind.

Native People Are Less Likely to Be in the Labour Force than Non-natives

According to the 1981 Census, half the adult native population were in the labour force compared with two-thirds of non-natives. In rural areas, just 4 in 10 native people were in the labour force in contrast to 6 in 10 non-natives. The gap narrowed considerably for those in urban areas - 62% of native people and 66% of non-natives were in the labour force. The participation rates of both male and female native people were lower than those of their non-native counterparts.

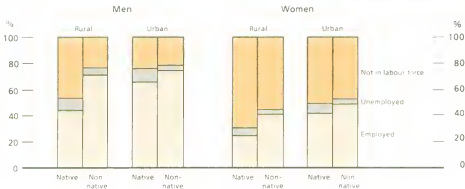
Native Unemployment Is Higher than Non-native

In both rural and urban areas, a higher proportion of native than non-native men and women were unemployed. Combined with low labour force participation rates, this meant that a relatively small percentage of native people had jobs.

Two-thirds of the native men in urban areas were employed, compared with three-quarters of non-natives. In rural areas, 45% of native men were working, while the percentage for non-native men was 71%.

Women were less likely to have jobs than were men, but again, employment rates were lower for native people. In rural areas, just one-quarter of native women had jobs in contrast to 40% of non-natives. The difference in urban areas was smaller - 42% of native women were employed compared with 50% of non-natives.

Percentage Distribution by Labour Force Activity of Native People* and of the Non-native Population,* Rural and Urban Areas, by Sex, Canada, 1981



*Population 15 years and over
Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Status Indians Living on Reserves Are Least Likely to Have Jobs

Among status Indians living on reserves, only 42% of the men and 22% of the women were employed. The highest rates of employment were among non-status Indians - 65% of the men and 43% of the women. But even these rates were lower than the 74% of non-native men and 48% of non-native women who were employed.

Seasonal Employment Is Common among Native People

Of those who were employed in 1980, just over half of native men worked 40 to 52 weeks, compared with three-quarters of non-native men. Fewer than half of native women worked 40 to 52 weeks in contrast to nearly two-thirds of non-native women.

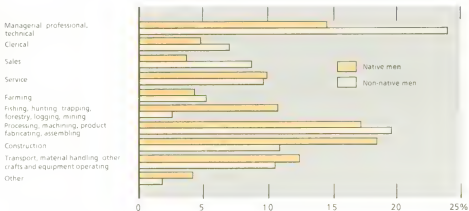
Native people were twice as likely as other Canadians to have worked 13 weeks or less. This was the case for 19% of native men but 8% of non-native men. More than one-quarter of the native women who were employed worked 13 weeks or less, in contrast to one-eighth of non-native women. The higher percentage of native people in the 15-24 age group probably contributed to this picture.

Native Men Are Concentrated in Construction Occupations

One in every 100 men in the labour force was identified as a native person, but 2 in every 100 construction workers were natives. Construction trades were the leading jobs held by native men, followed by processing, machining, product assembling and fabricating occupations, managerial, professional and technical occupations, and service occupations.

Chart 8

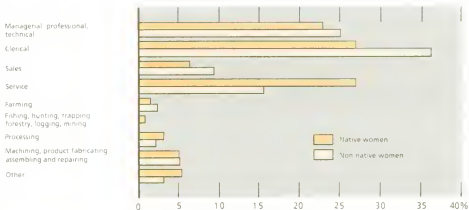
Percentage Distribution by Occupation of Native and Non-native Men 15 Years and Over Who Worked since January 1, 1980, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Chart 9

Percentage Distribution by Occupation of Native and Non-native Women 15 Years and Over Who Worked since January 1, 1980, Canada, 1981



Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Despite small numbers, native men were even more evident in traditional pursuits such as fishing, trapping, forestry and logging, where they made up 6 out of every 100 workers. By contrast, even though 14% of native men were in managerial, technical and professional fields and 4% in sales, they were underrepresented in these groups.

More than Half of Native Women Are in Clerical or Service Occupations

As with other Canadian women, native women were employed in fewer occupational categories than men. Native women were more likely than other women to work in service occupations and less likely to have clerical jobs. Equal proportions (27%) of native women were in these two fields, whereas more than a third of other women were clerks and just 16% were in service occupations.

Nearly one-quarter of female native workers had managerial, professional or technical jobs, compared with fewer than 15% of native men. The difference was related to the large proportions of native women in teaching, health and social science occupations.

In Brief

- Compared with other Canadians, fewer native people are in the labour force and they are more likely to be unemployed. This is particularly true for native people in rural areas.
- Of all native groups, the labour force activity of non-status Indians most closely resembles that of non-natives, perhaps because they are more apt to live in urban areas.
- Native people are more likely than other Canadians to have seasonal employment.
- Construction trades are the most common occupations of native men.
- The proportion of natives engaged in "traditional" pursuits such as trapping and fishing is relatively high, even though the actual numbers are small.
- Because of comparatively large numbers in teaching, health and social science occupations, a higher percentage of native women than native men are in the managerial/professional/technical category.

HOW MUCH INCOME DO NATIVE PEOPLE RECEIVE?

Average Native Incomes Are Lower than Non-native

In 1980, native incomes were approximately two-thirds of the non-native average: \$8,600 versus \$13,100. Non-status Indians had the highest incomes, and on-reserve status Indians, the lowest. Incomes of urban native people were somewhat above those received by natives in rural areas. The average income of urban native people was \$9,900 in 1980, about three-quarters of the average for non-natives living in cities. In rural areas, incomes were lower for both groups, with native incomes averaging \$7,400, which was 63% of those of non-natives.

Fifteen per cent of native men and 32% of native women over age 15 had no income in 1980. The corresponding proportions for the non-native population were lower: 7% of the men and 23% of the women. At the other end of the income scale, the proportion of non-native men who received \$20,000 or more (32%) was better than double the proportion of native men (14%). Much smaller proportions of women had high incomes, but while 6% of non-native women received \$20,000 or more, this was the case for just 2% of native women. Urban native people were far more likely to be in the upper income brackets than those in rural areas.

Table 6

Average 1980 Income of Native People* and of the Non-native Population,* Canada, 1981

	Status (on reserve)	Status (off reserve)	Non- status	Métis	Inuit	Total native people	Non- native population
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Total	7,100	8,800	9,900	9,500	8,300	8,600	13,100
Male	8,300	11,500	12,800	12,200	10,100	10,700	17,000
Female	5,300	6,300	6,700	6,400	5,700	6,100	8,400

* Population 15 years and over.

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

Average Employment Incomes of Full-time, Full-year Workers Are Closer

The average 1980 employment income of natives who worked mainly full-time the whole year was \$15,700 or about 83% of what non-natives received. Native men's income was around 82% of that of their non-native counterparts. Native women earned 88% of the average for non-native women. Thus, the much larger differences in total income reflect the substantially lower rate of full-time, full-year job-holding among native people.

Native men aged 30-44 who had worked full-time all year had the highest average employment income, whereas the non-native men with the highest average employment income were aged 45-64. For both native and non-native women, 30-44 years was the top-earning age group. The native men with the highest average employment income were non-status Indians. On the female side, the Inuit headed the list.

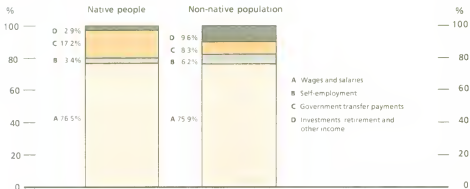
Nearly the Same Percentages of Native and Non-native Income Consist of Salaries and Wages

About three-quarters of both native and non-native income derived from wages and salaries. The differences lay in the proportions that came from government transfer payments, self-employment, investments, and retirement and other income.

The proportion of native income in the form of government transfer payments, such as family allowances, Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Unemployment Insurance and cash welfare payments was double that for non-natives. In contrast, non-natives received a greater share of their income from self-employment, investments, and retirement and other income.

Chart 10

Percentage Composition by Source of 1980 Income, Native People* and the Non-native Population,* Canada, 1981



*Population 15 years and over
Source: 1981 Census of Canada

Native people in rural districts were more dependent on government transfer payments than those in urban areas. Nearly one-quarter of all rural native income consisted of such payments in contrast to just 12% of the income of native people living in urban areas.

Non-status Indians Obtain a Larger Share of Their Income from Wages and Salaries than the Non-native Population or Any Other Native Group

Non-status Indians received more than 80% of their income from wages and salaries, and just over 10% in the form of government transfer payments. By contrast, 27% of the income of on-reserve status Indians was made up of government transfer payments, while 67% consisted of wages and salaries.

In Brief

- Average native income is substantially less than non-native. A large part of this difference is because fewer native people have full-time year-round jobs.
- Native people in rural areas have particularly low incomes.
- Among both men and women, non-status Indians have the highest average income of any native group.
- Government transfer payments are the second largest source of income for native people.
- Because some native people both work for wages and pursue traditional ways of life such as trapping and fishing, income-in-kind may be more important for them than for the non-native population.

WHAT KIND OF FAMILIES? HOW MANY MEMBERS?

Lone-parent Families Are More Common among Natives than Non-natives

The 1981 Census found that 8 out of 10 native families were of the husband-wife type, while for other Canadian families, the proportion was 9 out of 10. The percentage of native families headed by lone parents was almost double the percentage of non-native families in that situation. Female lone parents headed 17% of native families compared with 9% of non-native families.

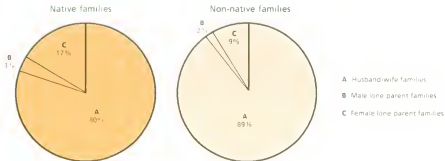
Female lone parenthood was most prevalent among status Indians living off-reserves - they represented 19% of all off-reserve status Indian families. The lowest incidence was among the Inuit - about 12% of Inuit families were headed by female lone parents.

Children Make Up a Larger Percentage of the People in Native than Non-native Families

Nearly half the native people who lived in families were children under 18, but children made up less than a third of the non-native family population. The proportion was highest among the Inuit - fully 53%.

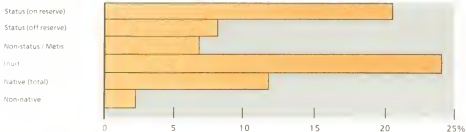
Chart 11

Percentage Distribution by Family Structure of Native and Non-native Families, Canada, 1981

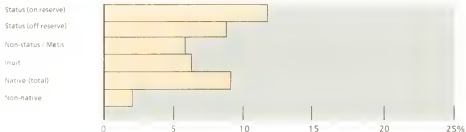


**Percentage of Native and Non-native Families With More than Four Children at Home,
by Family Structure, Canada, 1981**

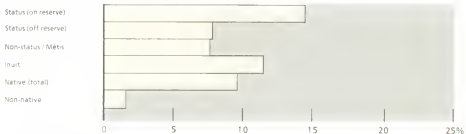
Husband-wife families



Male lone-parent families



Female lone-parent families



Three-quarters of native husband-wife families had children at home, in contrast to under two-thirds of non-native families. The highest proportion was among Inuit families, 86% of which had children at home.

The average number of children in native husband-wife families with children was 2.6, and 12% of these families had five or more children. Non-native families averaged 2.1 children, and just 2.3% had at least five. Inuit families had the highest average number of children - 3.3 - and nearly one-quarter had five or more.

Native Households Are More Likely to Include Extended Family Members or Another Family

Relatives such as parents, married children, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins were more likely to be members of native households. Such people made up more than 6% of the population in native households, but 2% of the non-native household population. The highest percentage was among status Indians living on reserves - 9%.

Over 3% of native households consisted of more than one family in contrast to just 1% of non-native households. The incidence was highest among on-reserve status Indians and the Inuit. About 6% of these households were of the multiple-family type.

In Native Households, More People Does Not Necessarily Mean More Income

For non-native households, whether urban or rural, as the number of people increased, so did average income. Yet, for native people, household size was not directly related to income level. For example, in 1980, five-person native households averaged \$21,300. Those with eight persons averaged \$19,700.

Few Native People Live Alone

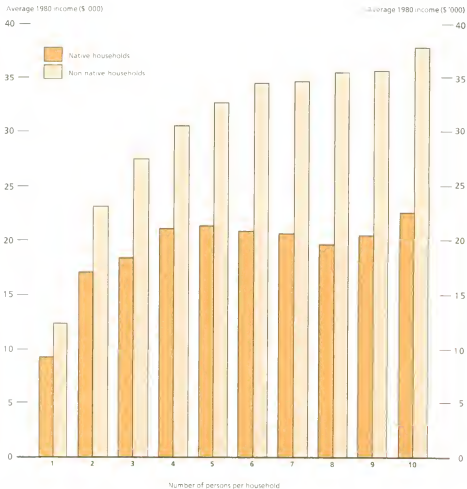
Native people were less inclined to live alone than non-natives. This was the life-style of fewer than 6% of adult natives compared with nearly 9% of other Canadians. Non-status Indians were most likely to live alone, while the Inuit were least apt to do so.

In Brief

- Native families and households are larger than non-native.
- Native families have more children and native households are more apt to include extended family members.
- The rate of lone parenthood among native people is twice as high as among non-natives.
- Native household income is lower than non-native, and does not necessarily rise as the number of members increases.

Chart 3.5

**Average 1980 Income of Native and Non-native Households,
by Number of Persons per Household, Canada, 1981**



WHAT ABOUT HOUSING?

Natives Are More Likely than Non-natives to Live in Single Houses

The majority of native people live in rural areas where apartment buildings and other multiple dwellings are scarce. As a result, the census found that close to two-thirds lived in single houses in contrast to just over half of other Canadians. In rural districts, almost the same proportion of native and non-native households - better than 8 out of 10 - were in single houses.

Just 3 in 10 native households were in apartments or other multiple-unit dwellings, in contrast to 4 in 10 non-native households. But if urban areas are examined separately, native households were more apt than non-native to live in this kind of building.

Native People Have a Relatively Low Rate of Home Ownership

Although native households were more likely to be in single-detached dwellings, they were less likely to own them. Just 7 in 10 claimed ownership, as opposed to 9 in 10 non-native households in such dwellings. Only 2 in 10 Inuit households in single homes actually owned the dwelling. On-reserve status Indians had the highest rate of home ownership: close to 85% of those in single dwellings.

Many Native Homes Need Repair

While just 1 in 15 non-native homes required major repairs, the proportion for native homes was 1 in 6. Close to one-quarter of the houses occupied by status Indians on reserves needed major repairs.

For both native people and non-natives, rural housing was in worse shape than urban. However, under 10% of the dwellings occupied by rural non-natives required major repairs, while the proportion for rural native homes rose above 21%.

Table 7

Housing Conditions of Native and Non-native Private Households, Canada, 1981

Housing conditions	Status (on reserve)	Status (off reserve)	Non-status/ Métis	Inuit	Total native households	Non-native households
	%	%	%	%	%	%
In need of major repairs	23.0	14.2	13.4	17.3	16.2	6.5
Lack central heating	50.7	18.8	16.5	26.3	26.0	9.0
Crowded	31.8	14.3	10.1	42.2	17.9	2.3
Lack bathroom	30.0	7.7	6.9	14.4	13.1	1.1

Source: 1981 Census of Canada.

Central Heating Is Less Common in Native than Non-native Homes

Only three-quarters of native homes had central heating in contrast to 9 out of 10 non-native homes. In rural areas, 54% of the dwellings occupied by natives were centrally heated as opposed to 80% of non-native households. Fewer than half the homes of on-reserve status Indians had central heating.

Native Homes Have a Much Greater Tendency to Be Crowded

For statistical purposes, a dwelling is said to be crowded when it contains more than one person per room. One in 43 non-native homes was crowded, but for native homes the proportion was 1 in 6.

The worst crowding was found among the Inuit. Over 40% of their homes had more than one person per room, and about 8% had more than two persons per room. Space was also limited for on-reserve status Indians, as 1 in 3 homes was crowded.

A Sizeable Proportion of Native Homes Lack Bathrooms

According to the 1981 Census, 13% of native homes had no bathroom compared with just 1% of non-native homes. In rural areas, the proportion rose for both groups: to 4% for non-natives and to 27% for native people. On-reserve status Indian homes were least likely to contain a bathroom: fully 30% lacked this facility.

Native people averaged 3.3 persons per bathroom, while the non-native average was 2.2. The Inuit had the highest number of persons per bathroom: 4.5.

In Brief

- Native people are more likely than non-natives to live in single homes, but they are less likely to own them.
- More than 16% of native homes need major repairs in contrast to 6.5% of non-native homes.
- Over one-quarter of native homes are not centrally heated.
- Native homes are more apt to be crowded and to lack bathrooms than non-native homes.
- On-reserve status Indians and the Inuit have the least favourable housing conditions.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Maturing of the current large generation of native children will result in growth of the labour force age group (15-64), the childbearing age group (15-44) and the family formation age group (20-29). These population trends have obvious implications. The increase of the working age population will mean more labour force entrants in an employment market already unable to satisfy current requirements. Although the fertility rate of native women is expected to decline, growth of the number of women of childbearing age could result in more births. The rise in the number of natives entering the family formation stage could increase housing demands.

The relatively low level of education of native people bars them from most well-paid occupations. However, if the trend toward more education for younger age groups continues, native people may secure better jobs in the future.

Despite transportation improvements and the opening of remote areas through resource development, many native people remain isolated from major labour and commodity markets. The lack of suitable jobs in and near native communities discourages active job search. If work is unavailable in areas where native people live, particularly on reserves, movement to urban areas by young people seeking jobs could increase. However, one result of such migration may be less use of native languages.

Should the increasing numbers of young native people entering the labour market fail to find jobs, the need for social assistance could grow. Also, if the tendency toward large families, low income and a high rate of lone parenthood persists, native people may become more dependent on government financial assistance and other social services.

Canada has taken a census of population every ten years from 1851 and every five years from 1956. The last census was taken on June 3, 1981. The census data constitute the most important single source of information on the population of Canada by many geographic areas from the national and provincial levels down to smaller groups such as cities, towns and municipalities. These data include: information on the number of people who live in Canada; their characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, language, educational level and occupation; number and types of families; and types of dwellings. Census information is used for a variety of purposes by private individuals, governments at all levels, educational institutions, business people and other organizations.

As part of a program to supplement 1981 Census statistical reports, a special series of popular studies has been undertaken on selected topics of public interest. Each study is a description of major trends and patterns. The data used are from the 1981 Census and other relevant sources. This series is designed for use at the high school and community college levels. However, it could also be of interest to the general public.

CANADA'S NATIVE PEOPLE is one of the reports in this series. It brings together under one cover highlights of information about the demographic, social and economic characteristics of the native population. Other studies in the series are being published at about the same time or within the next few months.

The manuscript for this study was prepared in the Social Statistics Field by M.S. Devereaux.

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